



City of Rockville

M E M O R A N D U M

October 1, 2004

TO: Catherine Tuck Parrish, Acting City Manager

FROM: Jim Wasilak, Chief of Long Range Planning
Mayra Bayonet, Planner II

THROUGH: Arthur Chambers, Director of Community Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan

The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information for the Mayor and Council and the Planning Commissioners' discussion at the forthcoming worksession.

Many City residents consider the "Twinbrook" neighborhood to be located both north and south of Veirs Mill Road. The Master Plan considers the area north of Veirs Mill Road to be Planning Area 7, Twinbrook Forest/Northeast Rockville. Planning Area 8, Twinbrook, is south of Veirs Mill Road. We propose that the two Planning Areas be considered together as one for the purposes of developing a new Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan. The existing Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan (Planning Area 8, approved in 1982) and the recommendations approved in the City-wide Comprehensive Master Plan (approved 2002) for Twinbrook Forest and Northeast Rockville (Planning Area 7) will be the starting point to identify and evaluate issues and conditions that require further study.

Some of the issues facing the area include:

- Impacts of Adjacent Development
- Existing Commercial Area
- Residential Infill
- Property Maintenance
- Traffic Issues
- Industrial Uses
- Institutional Issues
- Community Services

Impacts of Adjacent Development

Generally, new development or redevelopment projects within the geographic area could have an impact on the neighborhood. The area for the M-NCPPC Twinbrook Sector Plan, as well as Twinbrook Commons, is included. Others include the property at Halpine Road and Twinbrook Parkway that is located within the county, as well as 2.1 acres of land at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Twinbrook Parkway and Ardennes Avenue. A small parcel located on the northwest side of Baltimore Road between Rockville High School and Rock Creek Park, outside the City and adjacent to the Beth Tikvah synagogue, is recommendation for institutional use in the City plans. A zoning change to allow townhouse development is currently under review by Park and Planning.

The Twinbrook Metro station site is located in the southern part of the planning area. Portions of the property fall under Montgomery County jurisdiction, and portions fall within the City's Rockville Pike Corridor Planning Area. (A request for annexation into the City has been filed.) The site is slated for redevelopment as part of the Twinbrook Commons project and adequate buffering should be designed to protect the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood.

Existing Commercial Area

The Veirs Mill Road corridor acts as both a common area and a dividing line between the two Twinbrook communities, and contains the main commercial area serving the neighborhood. Shopping centers are located on both sides of Veirs Mill Road, near the intersection with Atlantic Avenue. There is an additional small retail site on Atlantic Avenue.

The 1982 Twinbrook neighborhood plan was aimed at maintaining and enhancing the predominately residential character of the area. Considering the two adjacent planning areas together offers an opportunity to examine the land use and zoning elements and other common issues.

Industrial Issues

The Twinbrook Neighborhood includes a small light industrial area in the I-2 Zone on Lewis Avenue in the southern portion of the Planning Area 8 and low-rise office buildings in the I-1 Zone on Halpine Road. The 1982 Plan recommended that the light industrial zone should not be permitted to expand in size or height. Any redevelopment or expansion of the industrial buildings along Lewis Avenue would also have an impact upon the neighborhood, as there are homes located directly across the street.

The old Suburban Propane site, also in the I-2 Zone, is slated for redevelopment as part of the proposed Twinbrook Commons mixed-use project.

The MNCPPC Twinbrook Sector Plan for the area south of the city boundary is aimed at fostering the creation of a transit-oriented, mixed-use community that will support light industrial uses and encourage the advanced technology and biotechnology industries.

Residential Infill

The planning area has very few vacant lots, or lots that could be re-subdivided. One such lot is a 4.6-acre property zoned R-60 and located on Norbeck Road adjacent to the Rockville Civic Center. There may be some environmental constraints for the property.

Property Maintenance

Two critical issues for residents of Twinbrook are enhancing the livability of their neighborhoods and maintain their housing values. It is important that the City maintains its infrastructure and continues funding replacement programs. The city has a Community Enhancement Program that is designed to respond to citizen complaints about code violations, to inspect rental properties and to enforce the Property Maintenance Code.

Traffic Issues

The Twinbrook neighborhoods are bounded by Rockville Pike and Norbeck Road, and bisected by Veirs Mill Road. Twinbrook Parkway acts as a connector between Veirs Mill Road and Rockville Pike. These busy roads reinforce the boundaries of the neighborhoods. The internal circulation system is designed to direct traffic on to a limited number of collector routes. Traffic backups occur at the limited number of entrance and exit points.

It will be important to ensure that the development of the Metro site does not adversely affect the neighborhood. The introduction of the Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit Plan (BRT) being planned by Montgomery County brings a new factor into the neighborhood, and could provide the potential for commercial and streetscape improvements in the corridor. The City has been part of the planning study.

Institutional Uses

There are a variety of institutional uses in the planning area. Some of these sites draw many patrons that travel through neighborhood streets. Impacts from these uses should be evaluated.

Community Services

The City provides most public services and facilities in the neighborhood. Responsibilities for some services are supplied by Montgomery County, such as education, fire/rescue, and libraries. There is a network of human service agencies and programs situated in the study area. Demographics indicate that the multi-cultural population is increasing in the neighborhood.